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Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A delivery sheath having a proximal region, an intermediate region, and a distal portion, the sheath comprising:

~~an elongated sheath having a proximal region, an intermediate region, and a distal portion;~~

an embolic protection filter having expanded and contracted states;

the proximal region having a proximal end and a distal end;

the intermediate region extending distally from the proximal region, the intermediate region increasing in outer dimension from a proximal end of the intermediate region to a distal end thereof; and

the distal portion comprising a single wall and extending distally from the intermediate region, the distal portion including a proximal end having an outer dimension that is greater than the outer dimension of the distal end of the intermediate region;

~~wherein~~ the distal portion tapering distally ~~tapers~~ in wall thickness along at least a portion of its length;

the distal portion defining a lumen, the lumen shaped and configured to allow the filter, in its contracted state, to be placed within the lumen.

21. (Previously Presented) The delivery sheath of claim 20, wherein the proximal region of the delivery sheath has a constant outer dimension.

22. (Previously Presented) The delivery sheath of claim 20, wherein the distally tapering wall thickness is formed by distally decreasing the outside dimension of the delivery sheath.

23.-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) A delivery sheath having a proximal region, an intermediate region, and a distal portion, the sheath comprising:

~~an elongated sheath having a proximal region, an intermediate region, and a distal portion;~~

an embolic protection filter having expanded and contracted states;

the proximal region having a proximal end and a distal end;

the intermediate region extending distally from the proximal region, the intermediate region increasing in outer dimension from a proximal end of the intermediate region to a distal end thereof; and

the distal portion comprising a single wall and extending distally from the intermediate region and including a distally tapering distal region having a distally

decreasing wall thickness, the distal portion including a proximal end having an outer dimension that is greater than the outer dimension of the distal end of the intermediate region, the distal portion further having a distal region tapering to an outer dimension that is less than the outer dimension of the proximal end of the distal portion;

the distal portion defining a lumen, the lumen shaped and configured to allow the filter, in its contracted state, to be placed within the lumen.

27. (Previously Presented) The delivery sheath of claim 26, wherein the proximal region of the delivery sheath has a constant outer dimension.

28. (Previously Presented) The delivery sheath of claim 26, wherein the distally decreasing wall thickness is formed by distally decreasing the outside dimension of the delivery sheath.

29.-31. (Cancelled)

32. (Currently Amended) A delivery sheath having a proximal region, an intermediate region, and a distal portion, the sheath comprising:

an elongated sheath having a proximal region, an intermediate region, and a distal portion;

an embolic protection filter having expanded and contracted states;

the proximal region having a proximal end and a distal end;

the intermediate region extending distally from the proximal region, the intermediate region increasing in outer dimension from a proximal end of the intermediate region to a distal end thereof; and

the distal portion comprising a single wall and extending distally from the intermediate region and including a distally tapering distal region having a distally decreasing wall thickness, the distal portion including a flared proximal end having an outer dimension that is greater than the outer dimension of the distal end of the intermediate region, the distal portion tapering to an outer dimension that is less than the outer dimension of the proximal end of the distal portion;

~~wherein~~ the distally decreasing wall thickness being formed by decreasing the outside dimension of the delivery sheath; and

the distal portion defining a lumen, the lumen shaped and configured to allow the filter, in its contracted state, to be placed within the lumen.

33. (Previously Presented) The delivery sheath of claim 32, wherein the proximal region of the delivery sheath has a constant outer dimension.

34.-36. (Cancelled)

37. (Currently Amended) A delivery sheath having a proximal shaft region, an intermediate shaft region, and a distal shaft portion, the sheath comprising:

~~an elongated sheath having a proximal shaft region, an intermediate shaft region, and a distal shaft portion;~~

an embolic protection filter having expanded and contracted states;
the a-proximal shaft region having a proximal end and a distal end;
the an-intermediate shaft region extending distally from the proximal shaft region,
the intermediate shaft region increasing in outer dimension from a proximal end of the
intermediate shaft region to a distal end thereof; and
the a-distal shaft portion comprising a single wall and extending distally from the
intermediate shaft region, the distal shaft portion including a proximal end having an
outer dimension that is greater than the outer dimension of the distal end of the
intermediate shaft region;
~~wherein~~ the distal shaft portion tapering distally ~~tapers~~ in wall thickness along at
least a portion of its length;
the distal shaft portion defining a lumen, the lumen shaped and configured to
allow the filter, in its contracted state, to be placed within the lumen.

38. (Previously Presented) The delivery sheath of claim 37, wherein the proximal shaft region of the delivery sheath has a constant outer dimension.

39. (Previously Presented) The delivery sheath of claim 37, wherein the distally tapering wall thickness is formed by distally decreasing the outside dimension of the delivery sheath.

40.- 42. (Cancelled)